Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge and Ethical Perceptions regarding Organ Donation among Medical Students in Pakistan

Version: 1 Date: 8 April 2013

Reviewer: Sanju Sobnach

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REVIEWER’S COMMENTS

This paper presents an important and interesting perspective of medical students regarding transplantation in Pakistan. Although this manuscript can provide some very relevant facts to the transplantation arena, it cannot be accepted in its current format and requires a number of major revisions (see below).

Comment 1:

The results section in the abstract needs to be reviewed. The authors should state the proportion (%) of the total medical student population that took part in this study. The statement that fourth year students were more aware of the organ transplantation bill when compared to the first year students is vague. How was this established; was this determined statistically (is there a P value)? It is also stated that the willingness to donate organs was significantly associated with religious acceptability of the procedure and the P value was stated as < 0.000. Should it not be P = 0.000 instead?

Comment 2:

The introduction section of this manuscript needs to be revised extensively. As it stands, the text is fragmented and ideas have not been structured in a coherent manner. I suggest that the authors approach the introduction in the following way:

- The definitions pertaining to organ donation and the brain death should be deleted from the text. Instead the authors should provide the reader with the following facts:

- Briefly describe the current status of organ transplantation in Pakistan (that is number of organ transplants performed in the country, types of transplants, indications for transplantation locally, the number of centres offering transplantation)
- Whether waiting lists have increased/ decreased or remained constant throughout the years and possible reasons for described trends.
- The current legislation regarding organ transplantation in Pakistan and the recognition of brain death
- The role of the Transplantation Society of Pakistan with regards to organ
transplantatio in Pakistan
- State whether there have been any studies describing the attitudes / beliefs of the general public
- Whether there is an undergraduate teaching program regarding organ transplantation at their institution.
- Detail reasons for conducting this study and what they wish to achieve with the generated results.

Comment 3:

The Methods section should include the following information.
- The total medical student population at Ziauddin University, the number of students within each year of study.
- Attach a copy of the self-administered questionnaire to the appendix of the manuscript
- Mention if there is formal transplantation teaching within the standard medical curriculum at their institution and when it is conducted during their undergraduate medical training (i.e. in which year of study).

Comment 4:

The results section is well structured and reads relatively well. The following issues need to be addressed.
- What do the authors mean by organ matching? Should the term donor compatibility be used rather?
- Table 1a: What do the authors mean with the subheadings “organ remains viable for transplant” and “Organ donation allowed in religion.” These subheadings need to be revised.
- In the Willingness to donate section, P value was stated as < 0.000. Should it not be P = 0.000 instead? Please verify statistical analysis and data.
- The Ethics and Perceptions Regarding Donation section needs to be rewritten completely. The sentences are fragmented and do not make grammatical sense. There is a wealth of useful data in this subsection, which could be extremely valuable to our readers.

Comment 5:

The following changes need to be made in the discussion section.
- The authors have again stated a P value of < 0.000. Kindly review the statistical analysis.
- The Transplantation of Human Tissues and Organ Bill should be described in the Introduction rather than in the Discussion section.
- 1st and 4th year should be written as first and fourth year in the text instead.

- The strengths and limitations subsection should be deleted as a subheading. It must be included within the text of the discussion as continuous writing. The data was well analysed in spite of the small sample size with a number of significant P values.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.